



News from

Congressman Ron Kind

REPRESENTING WISCONSIN'S THIRD
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

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Kind Condemns Iraqi Prisoner Abuse; Recognizes Honorable Troops

Calls for Congressional investigation to be conducted into allegations of abuse

Washington, DC – U.S. Rep. Ron Kind issued the following statement today on the House Resolution (H. Res. 627) deploring the abuse of Iraqi prisoners in U.S. custody:

“The acts of abuse against Iraqi prisoners by American service members are abhorrent and sad. This is not behavior reflective of American values; it is not behavior that helps our cause, and it is not behavior that will be tolerated. Thorough investigations need to root out those responsible, directly and indirectly, for this unlawful conduct no matter how high up the chain of command it goes. Those responsible must be held accountable for their actions.

“Congress needs to be highly involved in investigating the actions of abuse at Abu Ghraib prison and the conditions and circumstances that led these abuses. Reports show that the military was well aware of the situation and conducting its own investigations for months prior to the release of the photos at Abu Ghraib now circulating through the world media. The failure of the administration to keep Congress informed of the extent and seriousness of prisoner abuse, and the photos documenting it, is unacceptable.

“Further, Congress must address and investigate the role of private security forces in Iraq. These forces, which constitute the second largest army in Iraq and account for over 40% of all contracting costs in Iraq, are outside the U.S. chain of command. The ability to hold these individuals accountable for their actions under law is questionable.

“We must not lose focus, however, that the over 300,000 U.S. military personnel who have served and are serving in Iraq are doing an honorable job under difficult and dangerous conditions. When I visited Iraq in October, 2003, I met with many honorable troops, including soldiers from western Wisconsin, who were performing their mission with outstanding commitment and professionalism. The abuses at Abu Ghraib serve only to cloud the accomplishments and sacrifices of our troops and put honorable U.S. service members in greater danger.”

“Perception matters when trying to execute our foreign policy and especially a military mission. This is not only a battle of military might, but a battle for the hearts and minds of the Iraqi people and the rest of the Arab world. We are coming dangerously close to losing that battle, and the abuses at the Abu Ghraib prison serve only to exacerbate this unfortunate reality. We must reinforce to the international community through our words and our actions that the United States is committed to helping the Iraqi people prosper in a free society.”